

Draft Minutes for Ward 6 NPA Meeting  
June 7, 2018

Steering Committee Members present: Matt Grady, Mary Riley and Gail Rafferty

7:05 PM – Meeting called to order

1. Minutes from the May 3, 2018 meeting were approved

2. Public Comment Period:

Maryanne Ward from Ward 7 commented on the Everyone Loves a Parade mural off of Church St. She circulated a petition for attendees to sign, if they wished, which aims to maintain the mural as is until the year 2020.

3. The Neighborhood Project Update: Gillian Nanton was unable to present to the NPA about the project. Matt Grady gave information that there will be a 6/26/18 meeting regarding this project at Contois Auditorium at 5:30 PM.

4. Greenride Bikeshare: Nic Anderson

Nic Anderson from Champlain College's Transportation Services presented on the new bikeshare program. Bikesharing is like carsharing – bikes can be picked up at the various hubs, and dropped off at other hubs. About 8 years ago Local Motion did a study regarding bikesharing in our region. At that time the analysis was that it would not be all that feasible. Costs have come down since then as technology has improved. The newer analysis by BTV Walk/Bike indicated that it was more possible. A group of individuals 18 months ago got together with regional transportation services to get the current bikeshare initiated. This bikeshare is based on a business sponsorship model and is supported by Ben and Jerry's and Seventh Generation. These bikes are intended for shorter point to point trips. There are currently 17 hubs, in Burlington, So. Burlington and Winooski. Annual membership is \$50. Monthly membership is \$15/mo. One ride is \$2. So far, there have been 1,007 users, 2,500 trips, and 5,100 miles have been ridden. One-third of the riders are annual members, two-thirds of the riders have been quick trips. There are also discounted memberships based on income. Riders must be 18 for liability reasons. Q: If you are over 18 can a minor ride a bikeshare bike with you? A: No. Q: When are electric bikes coming? A: Right now all the bikes are 7 speed bikes. But the contract calls for 25% of the bikes to be E-bikes (electric assist), hopefully by the end of the summer. Q: How do you become a member? Go to the website: [Greenridebikeshare.com](http://Greenridebikeshare.com), or you can go to local outlets such as Local Motion, etc. Q: Is there random drop off? A: You can drop these off randomly, but there

will be a \$5 fee for not leaving it at a hub. The next rider will get \$1 credit if they return it to a hub. Closest hubs in Ward 6 are Arts Riot and Champlain College.

More info at [Greenridebikeshare.com](http://Greenridebikeshare.com). There is an App as well.

#### 5. Legislative Report: Sen. Philip Baruth & Rep. Barbara Rachelson

Senator Philip Baruth gave an update: In mid-May the Senate presented a budget and tax bill that was vetoed by the governor. Sen. Baruth described the current situation as a “standoff” over whether to use a one-time \$40 to \$50 million surplus for a property tax paydown in this current year, and face a deficit next year, or put it to a teacher pension paydown which will save \$100 million dollars over time. Philip and Rep. Barbara Rachelson favor the latter – seeing it as more fiscally responsible. The Senate today (May 7, 2018) passed the House’s 2<sup>nd</sup> budget, which, in Philip and Barbara’s opinion, is not controversial, however it does leave the option for the non-residential tax rate to go up. Representative Rachelson also addressed the standoff, indicating she was not sure how the standoff will be resolved. The question of raising the student-teacher ratio to save money, did not seem to make sense to her regarding the details. Barbara has introduced a bill that would have Vermont have only one school district which she sees as a clear path forward to reduce costs for the schools. Barbara indicated that people are nervous about a possible state shutdown. Q: Is the choice between a small rebate on property taxes this year, and face bigger problems next year, or pay down teacher pension obligations now, saving quite bit later on? A: Philip agrees this is the issue, and is concerned that the Education fund will be in even worse shape next year. He supports raising the property tax rates on non-residential properties. There are concerns about the state’s bond ratings if the budget is not passed and there is a shutdown. Barbara and Philip indicated that there has been tri-partisan support for the two budgets presented. Q: Is the non-residential tax rate that is in question applicable to second homes, and commercial property? A concern was raised about taxes on rental properties in Burlington going up and being a burden. A: There was not clarity about what exactly falls under non-residential.

Rep. Rachelson stated that we spend 1.8 billion on approximately 88,000 students. Others indicated the number may be lower than that now, with declining enrollment. We have 50 schools with fewer than 90 students in them. Barbara believes that consolidation would yield more options for students.

Q: What are the deadlines regarding passing a budget? A: June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Essential services will continue if there is a shutdown – what is “essential” is being discussed. Sen. Baruth indicated that this has not come up before for people to have good answers for this. Sen. Baruth indicated that he is concerned about advance threats of vetoes becoming a normal way of governing. Both representatives indicated that the cost of keeping the legislature

in session costs between \$40,000 to \$60, 000/day and they are hoping a budget is passed soon.

#### 6. City Council Report: Karen Paul and Joan Shannon:

Karen Paul reported that they are near the end of the city budgeting process. The plan is for the council to vote on the budget on June 18<sup>th</sup>. There is no tax increase this year – this budget will keep \$500,000, for the early learning initiative and \$175,000 for the housing trust fund.

All dept. heads have been reappointed. Neal Lunderville from BED will become the Interim Director of CEDO through 2018, creating a vacancy at BED.

Rotary project – appraisals are in process for the land that would need to be taken.

Proposed road by Curtis Lumber off of Pine St. connect with Battery St. is still in play. There has been a plan to try to fund it all with city/state funds in order to stay away from some of the complications of federal funding. The costs may be too much, however, so the council will be looking at the various options for funding that project.

Joan Shannon addressed the residency waiver for Superintendent Obeng, which was passed recently by the City Council. Joan indicated that she voted against it, and is concerned about whether this sets a precedent, and what the residency requirements will mean going forward given this vote. Karen also indicated that she is generally not in favor of residency exemptions, however did vote in favor of this exemption. The School Board had already allowed the superintendent to reside in So. Burlington, and Karen felt voting down the exemption could have forced the firing of the superintendent, and she also did not want to interfere with another governing body's decisions.

Both councilors also reported that discussions are taking place regarding possible expansion of the downtown improvement district.

Both Joan and Karen gave an update about City Hall Park – there was a meeting on Wed 6/618 about the trees and future plans for the park. City staff presented options for saving some of the trees. Joan reiterated what the city arborist had indicated – that many of these City Hall Park trees are unhealthy or dying. They were planted without any planning and foresight as to the canopy, which now is overlapping. Soil compaction is extreme, causing the roots to circle and some of the trees are suffocating. A new design would make all the paths ADA accessible. If ADA accessibility is not included in the new plan, there would be only one additional tree saved among the ones that already will be taken down due to their health. There is some discussion ongoing about the crabapple trees near to City Hall. A survey indicated that people would like to keep the same number of the trees, but also want more grass – incompatible goals.

Q: Could the councilors talk about residential parking and Chapin Spencer's recent presentation to the council? A: There was a resolution put forward by the council asking for an update about the study done on residential parking. DPW will present to the council in August on the findings of the study. Q: Is there an actual ordinance that will be approved by the Public Works Commission in the next couple months? A: The councilors do not believe any ordinances will be approved before an update to the councilors in August. Q: Is DPW going to do a parked car count to alter anything about residential parking in any of the neighborhoods? A: Councilors were not sure, but will check. Q: What is the update about the Champlain Parkway? A: Most of the eminent domain issues will be temporary during the construction phase. Some property owners are disputing the costs associated with the process.

## 7. Champlain College Update: Sandy Yusen and Nic Anderson

Sandy and Nic gave updates related to the new building at 194 St. Paul St. and also Champlain College's initiatives to discourage students from owning cars and driving. The project at 194 St. Paul St. is in its final phase. Students will be moving in mid-August. The building will have retail/commercial on the first floor – parking below the building, 314 beds (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students), 105 apts. Floors 2 to 6 will be student housing. The building is fully subscribed for the fall. Champlain is still finalizing the details re retail. Perky Planet may be going in which is a coffee shop that employs disabled adults. Other retail options are being considered as well. Champlain's master plan of 2017 is to have 90% of the undergraduates live in college housing, and this will advance that goal – hoping to relieve the pressure on the housing market. 75% of students are living on-campus now. Undergraduate enrollment is 2,200 students. Q: Will there be any tours? A: There will be an open house mid-August and a barbecue. Neighbors can contact Sandy Yusen at Champlain to find out about that event. [syusen@champlain.edu](mailto:syusen@champlain.edu).

Nic Anderson reported on Champlain College's goal to reduce single use vehicles. There is free bus service for all employees and students, discounted bikeshare memberships, and free shuttles. Disincentives include requiring paid car permits, active enforcement of permitting, inconvenient parking lots, etc. They stress to students that perhaps they do not need a car. 80% of on-campus students do not have a car. This coming August there will be a restriction on first-year students having a car. Nick also reported that on South Willard Street there are new LED light fixtures on the crosswalks, and new signage for a safer pedestrian crosswalk.

Students will not be allowed to park at 194 St. Paul St. or on the surrounding streets. They will need to park at the Lakeside parking lot and there will be shuttles to and from the St. Paul St. location during peak hours. Existing buses will be replaced with propane fueled buses – quieter, and more energy efficient. There are two parking garage entrances at 194 St. Paul St. which will be public parking garages managed by the city – 53 spaces total. In the corner of one of

the garages there will be a section cordoned off for some Champlain staff, and retail folks. Move in days and move out days, the college will take over the garages.

The weekend of August 17th, students will be moving in to 194 St. Paul St. They will be assigned a block of time to move in, so it will be staggered with a small group each hour, over that weekend, with hopefully minimal impact to the neighborhood. There will be a few parking places on the street that will be reserved that weekend for any larger trucks. This coming summer, moving in across all of Champlain College will be staggered across a ten day period, and will not overlap with UVM. There was a comment of appreciation for Champlain's attention to neighborhood concerns. Q: What is the charge to students for a parking permit on Maple St.? A: \$175/per semester:

#### 8. School Board Report: Claire Wool and Jeff Wick

Claire Wool and Jeff Wick, School Board chair and vice-chair, respectively, gave an update. The school board is currently meeting 2 X a month. June 12<sup>th</sup> is the next meeting and the School board will be giving its report to Superintendent Obeng regarding the Capital Campaign. Jeff stressed that employee issues/relationships is a focus this year, and that all the collective bargaining is over for now. Jeff indicated that he is feeling optimistic. Also acknowledged that there are some scheduling issues and concerns over students not getting the courses they need. Q: Has the School board ever hired a third party to facilitate retreats or help promote relationships A: Columbia University Teachers College and UVM have recently done a "climate survey" to parents, employees, students to garner feedback for the district. School by school analysis and also central administration. Q: Are the AP courses requiring the students to study on their own for the AP exams? A: No, the AP courses are geared to take the AP exams. Q: Has there been a reduction in AP offerings? A: Jeff is not aware of any eliminations in AP courses. There has been a reduction in teachers that has resulted in fewer course offerings, overall. There are no longer honors freshman classes, although students can opt to do extra work and create an honors level class. BHS enrollment is the same as 2015. Numbers are not declining currently. 250 students BHS students, 11 Horizons students, 1 On Top student, and 55 parents from Parent University will be graduating in June. Q: Why was the request put in to grant the exemption for the Superintendent Obeng to reside outside of the city? A: Claire indicated they "inherited" an existing waiver. The current contract is for three years, but the residency waiver will go on as long as Superintendent Obeng lives in his current So. Burlington residence.

9:00 Motion to Adjourn

Minutes submitted by Gail Rafferty

